



File Code: 1570 (218)

Date: 8/24/15

Dear Objector:

This letter is a consolidated response to all objections received to the Divide Travel Plan on the Helena National Forest. The Responsible Official, Helena National Forest Supervisor William Avey, and I as the Objection Reviewing Officer have read your objections and suggested remedies in light of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD), the project file, and the comments submitted on this project. This letter details my responses to objections based on my review and understanding of the disclosed environmental effects of this project Forest Plan Amendment.

As you are aware, there are two decisions to be made: The Divide Travel Plan decision, reviewable under the objections regulations at 36 CFR 218, and the programmatic Forest Plan elk amendment, reviewable under objection regulations at 36 CFR 219. Since the timeframes under the two regulations are different, I extended the time to review and respond to the travel plan decision for 30 days so that the two interlocked decisions could be reviewed at the same time. This objection response letter responds to all the objection issues for both the travel plan decision and the programmatic Forest Plan elk amendment, completing the reviews under both 36 CFR 218 and 36 CFR 219.

The regulations allow for the parties to meet in order to resolve the issues (36 CFR 218.11(a), 36 CFR 219.57(a)). The objection resolution meeting was held in Helena at the Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office on August 19, 2015, starting at 10:00 a.m. I want to thank the objectors and interested persons who took the time to participate in the resolution meeting: Jody Loomis (objector number 85), Mike Sedlock (90), Doug Abelin for David Koch representing Capital Trail Vehicle Association (89), Ashton Loomis (92), Greg Munther representing Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (93), Jennifer Loomis (94), Fred Bailey (96), Patricia Daugaard (100), Miles Partin (101), David Carroll (103), Alan Young (106), Gayle Joslin representing Helena Hunters and Anglers (111), Dennis Milburn representing Last Chance Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Montana, Joe Cohenour representing Tenmile South Helena Forest Restoration Collaborative Committee, John Gatchell representing Montana Wilderness Association and Montana High Divide Trails, and Jenny Sitka representing Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. While we could not resolve your objection points, I came to a better understanding of your concerns.

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), I must provide a written response that sets forth reasons for the response. However, this written response need not be point-by-point. Those issues that do not require additional discussion or instruction to the Responsible Official are outlined at the conclusion of this letter. Those objection issues that I find require further discussion and/or instruction to the Responsible Official are detailed below.

This letter satisfies the requirements of 36 CFR 218.11 and 36 CFR 219.57(b), *Resolution of Objections*. No further review from any other Forest Service or U.S. Department of Agriculture official of my written response to these objections is available.



Response to Objections

I find that the following objection issues require additional explanation or instruction to the Responsible Official. The Responsible Official shall carry out these instructions prior to signing the Record of Decision for the Divide Travel Plan and programmatic Forest Plan elk amendment.

Issue 1: The objectors contend that closing trails on August 31 that are currently open through October 15 unduly restricts access to these trails and adjacent lands (objectors 75, 85, 89, 90, 92, 96 and 100).

Response: The Forest's Response to Comments on Alternative 5 and the Updated Forest Plan Amendment offer a clear discussion of the considerations and trade-offs associated with the change in trail closure dates. This change is designed to address recommendations by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and others regarding elk security. The Forest places an emphasis on providing a high-quality motorized system through the planning process (draft ROD Appendix A, p. 6, and summary p. viii.). Adequate analysis and consideration of effects for the Spotted Dog-Baldy Ridge-Kading area and Spotted Dog-Little Blackfoot Herd unit are covered in the FEIS (Vol. 1, pp. 314 to 316 and 498 to 503).

Instructions: The Forest's Response to Comments on Alternative 5 (Appendix F) was posted to the web separately from Alternatives 1 through 4, and members of the public have commented that they are unable to locate the Forest's responses. I am instructing the Forest to include the Response to Comments in the updated FEIS, which will be published in the Federal Register.

Issue 2: The objectors contend routes 502, 503 and 504 in the Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) should remain open, and that inclusion of a route in an IRA is not justification for closing it (objectors 85 and 89).

Response: I find the analysis is sufficient with respect to closing roads within IRAs. The draft ROD (p. 8) specifically provides rationale for closing routes 502, 503 and 504.

Routes 502, 503 and 504, known as the Kading Grade, are short loop trails located in the IRA. Extensive trail work would be required to address the resource issues on these routes. Adequate motorized trail opportunities are provided outside the IRA in the travel plan area.

In keeping with the Forest Service 2005 Travel Management Rule, which is discussed and cited in the project record, the preferred alternative and draft ROD emphasize providing a high-quality motorized system that meets the preferences of motorized users while also meeting the Forest's resource management and protection considerations and requirements. Decisions to close routes 502, 503 and 504 were predicated on whether specific roads or road segments are manageable and consistent with Forest Service travel management regulations 36 CFR part 212 subpart B, and I find that the analysis is sufficient with respect to closing roads within IRAs.

Instructions: The decision has already addressed routes 502, 503 and 504 in the IRA. I am instructing the Forest however to further explain why the Forest is closing spur roads.

Issue 3: The objector claims the draft ROD would significantly reduce over-snow opportunities, citing Minnehaha and Myers Hill. The objector claims over-snow travel leaves no trace and does not disturb wildlife and therefore the Forest should not further restrict over-snow travel (objector 085).

Response: Minnehaha Forest Road 527 is designated as an open route for over-snow. In the draft ROD, consideration was given to over-snow opportunities, and closure area boundaries were delineated to provide continued over-snow use in high value areas. This includes the Meyers Hill and Jericho areas. Over-snow opportunities also remain in IRA. Over-snow closure area boundaries were not necessarily tied to IRA boundaries specifically to provide this continued opportunity.

Presently 46 miles of routes are open to over-snow. In the draft ROD, 180 miles of routes are proposed to be open to over-snow vehicles. Presently 122,844 acres are open to over-snow. The draft ROD proposes 86,605 acres to be open to over-snow travel.

Instructions: Include in the final ROD additional details to clarify over-snow vehicle use.

Issue 4: The objectors contend the Forest did not give a hard look at the need for motorized use within the Sweeny Creek area (objectors 85, 89, 92 and 94).

Response: As discussed in the hydrology specialist report and FEIS, sediment reduction goals from system and non-system roads and trails range from 40 percent to 100 percent, depending on area and route classification. The Sweeny Creek area was identified by wildlife biologists as a high value area for wildlife, specifically winter range for big game. Contrary to the objectors' allegations, the FEIS analyzed four alternatives in detail (alternatives 1 through 4), all of which proposed to leave the Sweeny Creek area open to motorized use. Only the preferred alternative (Alternative 5) closes the Sweeny Creek area based on the needs of area resources, as well as the need for the Forest to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

I find that the environmental analysis follows the direction of the Forest Plan and applicable regulations requiring analysis of a full range of alternatives. However, site-specific data and/or field notes for routes to be closed were not presented in the FEIS or the supporting documentation.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to add the wildlife and hydrology field notes to the project record.

Issue 5: Objectors contend that elk hiding cover is inadequately addressed. Specific concerns relate to development of the Forest Plan Amendment for elk, application of the Hillis paper, and differences of opinion regarding elk needs and past management relative to hiding cover and adherence to Forest Plan Standard 4a (objectors 82, 89, 90, 93, 100, 103 and 111).

Response: The elk amendment was developed to improve elk security and habitat management while establishing guidelines that can be met. The amendment incorporates results from the 2013 Forest Service/Montana FWP *Collaborative Overview and Recommendations for Elk Habitat Management* report. The amendment considers the impacts of open motorized routes on elk security, establishes blocks of secure habitat, and can be measured regardless of changes in hiding cover.

The amendment does change some portions of the existing "hiding cover security during hunting season" standard (specifically Forest-wide Standard 4a). However, Forest-wide Standard 3 still applies, which requires maintaining at least 35 percent hiding cover on summer range (typically where elk would be during archery and rifle hunting seasons). The "security area" approach in the amendment replaces the "road density/hiding cover index" in Forest Plan Standard 4a as a method for managing and measuring the vulnerability of elk to hunting. In short, the security

area approach focuses on larger blocks of secure habitat and includes the early archery season, relying less on cover/road density combinations.

I find that the Forest has completed a thorough analysis of the expected effects of this change on elk as documented in the FEIS, draft ROD, and the wildlife specialist reports. The draft ROD Big Game Security Forest Plan Amendment discusses rationale behind the selected Alternative B and how it relates to the Divide Travel Plan project area.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to contact FWP concerning the elk hunting opportunities directly related to security changes associated with larger blocks vs. hiding cover and the road density matrix.

Issue 6: The objectors contend that developing unique elk amendment direction for this area (as opposed to an overall plan for the forest) is simply a process of changing Forest Plan standards to fit projects. Objectors contend there is little science or analysis presented to support the proposed management under the amendment, and that the public has been left out of the process by allowing too little time for comment on the amendment (objectors 82, 93, and 111).

Response: Objections to developing project-specific elk amendment direction for this area, rather than Forest-wide, are addressed in the FEIS (p. 429). Completing an amendment at the Forest-wide scale is beyond the scope of the Divide Travel Plan project.

The Forest has provided adequate analysis and discussion as to elk habitat needs and issues related to road density and security in the Divide Travel Plan draft ROD and FEIS, the Elk Amendment draft ROD, the wildlife specialist reports, and Inter-agency working group meeting notes contained in the project file. However, the analysis does not provide background information describing the scientific rationale supporting new security numbers.

The Forest provided a 45-day comment period for the draft EIS, which contained the elk amendment analysis. The Responsible Official determined that an additional September 11 to October 6 comment period for the elk amendment edits was an adequate additional comment period.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest in the Big Game Amendment final ROD to explain clearly why the elk amendment was developed for this area, rather than Forest-wide, at this time. I am also instructing the Forest to provide the rationale used to arrive at the elk security percentages in the final ROD.

Issue 7: The objectors contend that closing dead-end spur routes will result in decreased recreational opportunities, including camping, lost access to historic mine sites, and decreased hunting opportunities for aging tribal members (objectors 85, 089, 92, and 103).

Response: In keeping with the Forest Service 2005 Travel Management Rule, which is discussed and cited in the project record, the preferred alternative and draft ROD emphasize providing a high-quality motorized system that meets the preferences of motorized users while also meeting the Forest's resource management and protection considerations and requirements.

The analysis sufficiently addressed broad objection points. However, it would be beneficial to provide rationale and intent behind closing Forest Road 1852.

Instructions: The Deciding Official has already provided some rationale for closing spur routes. However, as I instructed in Issue 2, there is value in expanding the discussion about why the Forest is closing spur roads.

Issue 8: The objector contends that the draft ROD for the Divide Travel Plan creates conflicts with the Hazardous Tree Removal project Decision Notice (August 2010) and therefore is in violation of NEPA and the Forest Plan. Specifically, the objector requests that the management of the Treasure Mountain Road remain unchanged from current management (objector 103).

Response: First, the Divide Travel Plan interdisciplinary team (IDT) included a planning forester who informed the project on access needs for firewood and other forest products.

Second, the Hazardous Tree Removal project was not a travel planning analysis and therefore was not examining the full scope of what would be needed in a future travel system. Rather, that project was focused on providing hazardous tree mitigation for those roads that were currently open on the travel system when that decision was made.

Third, the Forest incorporated the Hazard Tree Removal project into the cumulative effects scenario for the Divide Travel Plan FEIS.

I find that the Divide Travel Plan does not conflict with the Hazard Tree Removal decision, and that the Divide Travel Plan FEIS appropriately incorporates this earlier decision into the analysis of cumulative effects.

Instructions: None required

Issue 9: The objector contends that: a) the cumulative effects of motorized route closures from the proposed action are not considered or disclosed in the FEIS as required by NEPA; b) the Forest fails to demonstrate, using site specific data (such as on Forest Road 227-E1 as required by the 3-State OHV ROD); that the quantity of sediment generated from OHV recreation in the project area is significant relative to natural sediment levels, and therefore road and crossing closures are justified; and c) sedimentation can be easily mitigated by implementing Best Management Practices and improving crossings (objector 89).

Response: I find that the analysis of the cumulative effects of road closures on motorized recreation was conducted in compliance with NEPA.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service required as project mitigation that the Forest provide protection at fords until such crossings could be upgraded to prevent risk of loss to early life stages of bull trout. Interim project mitigation relies on temporarily suspending open fords from ongoing motorized disturbance until alternative crossings are installed.

Although the measurements and indicators in the analysis are sufficient to evaluate the effects of each of the alternatives on aquatic habitat, I find that the site-specific sediment delivery data for routes to be closed are not presented in the FEIS.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to add the site-specific sediment data and related modeling to the project record.

Issue 10: The objector contends that the Forest did not address public comments provided by Native Ecosystems Council and Alliance for the Wild Rockies on September 20, 2014 (objector 82).

Response: The Forest wrote a response to the September 2014 comments. However, this document was inadvertently omitted from the FEIS. The Forest has informed me they sent this information to the objector and it was posted to the Forest project website.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to add the Responses to Comments on Alternative 5 (Appendix F) to the updated FEIS.

Issue 11: An objector is concerned that there is no map of wolverine denning habitat in relation to winter recreation management (objector 82).

Response: The effects of winter recreation are discussed in the FEIS (pp. 260, and 354 to 358), but this section of the FEIS lacks a map for visual representation. I agree that a map depicting the wolverine denning habitat would increase clarity and help in disseminating the information.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to add a map depicting the wolverine denning habitat related to winter recreation to the project record and post it to the Forest website where the Divide Travel Plan documentation is located.

Issue 12: An objector is concerned that there are no maps that identified locations of various forest carnivores, such as grizzly bear, lynx, and wolverine in the planning area (objector 082).

Response: The FEIS analyzes effects to carnivores (pp. 333 to 366). With the exception of lynx (pp. 347 to 349), there are no maps for the other forest carnivores. I agree that providing maps identifying the locations of forest carnivores in the project area would increase clarity and help in disseminating the information.

Instructions: I am instructing the Forest to add maps depicting locations of various forest carnivores in the project area to the project record and post them to the Forest website where the Divide Travel Plan documentation is located.

Objections Requiring No Instruction or Discussion

Based on my review of the FEIS, the draft ROD, and the content in the project file, I find the following list of issues and contentions do not require further discussion or instructions to the Responsible Official for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed actions, even though not agreeable to some, are in compliance with applicable regional guidelines, the Forest Plan (to include amendments to the plan) and/or law, regulation and policy, as supported by adequate analysis and rationale made available in the FEIS and draft ROD and further supported by information in the project file;
- 2) The effects to resources and/or species have been appropriately addressed in the FEIS;
- 3) The Forest already provided an adequate and thorough response to the issue in the Response to Comments section in the FEIS;
- 4) The appropriate models, methodology, and/or science was applied and described in the FEIS and the analysis is adequate;
- 5) An adequate range of alternatives was considered, and the purpose and need was properly established based on Forest Plan direction;
- 6) The objector(s) misread or misinterpreted the information in the FEIS/draft ROD;

7) The issue, as presented by the objector, was too broad/vague to understand what effects/inadequacies were being alleged;

8) The requested information/data was already provided in the draft EIS, FEIS and/or draft ROD.

Issue: The objectors argue that various specific trails need to be open or closed (objectors 75, 89, 93, 96, 101 and 103).

Issue: The objector claims that Alternative 5 discriminates against the elderly through seasonal motor vehicle road closures (objector 75).

Issue: The objectors feel that adequate consideration was not given the disabled and to the number of retirees in the population and veterans who have hoped to visit the Divide Project area in their retirement years (objectors 89, 90 and 94).

Issue: The objector feels that the Sweeny area should remain open to motorized access for the elderly (objector 100).

Issue: The objectors contend that replacing the 300 foot rule with the 70 foot rule would degrade the quality of recreational experiences, limit opportunities for elderly or disabled recreationists, limit firewood gathering, and would expose pets and children to increased danger from vehicle traffic (objectors 85, 89, 92 and 94).

Issue: The objector challenges the lack of early trail closures because elk are not protected (objector 93).

Issue: The objectors state the FEIS and draft ROD should take into consideration the quantity of designated wilderness in assessing the need for non-motorized recreational opportunities in the planning area (objectors 85 and 89).

Issue: The objectors contend there are problems with analysis of the Continental Divide Trail reroute, use, and motorized closures (objectors 089 and 90).

Issue: The objector contends that using helicopters for wildlife counts during calving season is disruptive to wildlife (objector 100).

Issue: The objectors feel that the Forest was predisposed to closing motorized trails (objectors 089, 100, 101 and 106).

Issue: The objector claims that private property rights would be violated by closing routes which also provide access to private property (objector 103).

Issue: The objectors allege that the proposed decision violates NEPA and the Forest Plan by resulting in the loss of historic access, specifically RS 2477 roads and roads paid for by tax payers through purchaser credit (objectors 89 and 103).

Issue: The objector contends that closing roads is in opposition to Montana FWP goals for hunter access and also places undue burden on hunters who do not have OHVs (objector 103).

Issue: The objector contends that: a) the decision maker is relying on subjective fish and hydrology data, and modeling and baseline data are not disclosed; and b) the closing of the roads

for bull trout when the Little Blackfoot is not critical habitat is a violation of the ESA (objector 103).

Issue: The objectors claim the Divide process was too long and did not connect with the public. They claim they are overwhelmed with multiple travel planning processes among agencies and feel it was intentional. They also claim private meetings with special interest groups are not the intent of NEPA (objectors 89 and 103).

Issue: The objectors contends the FEIS and draft ROD did not adequately address the social, economic, and environmental justice issues associated with multiple-use access and motorized recreation (objectors 89 and 103).

Issue: The objector states that not having the project record final and available to the public during the objection period results in the public not having the same information available to them as the decision maker in formulating the draft decision (objector 103).

Issue: The objector recommends that elk abundance should not be used as a proxy for deer and moose population health. Instead a security standard for big game should be developed that represents the habitat cover needs of deer and moose, as well as elk (objector 111).

Issue: The objectors contend inadequate and unfunded maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement of roads/trails and motorized travel virtually assures that any standard for big game security will not function properly (objectors 89 and 111).

Issue: The objector contends that the conversion of existing roads to motorized trail does not really create a new trail or a high quality motorized trail system and does not provide the same user experience as a trail (objector 89).

Issue: The objector alleges groups are being penalized for past coordination on the 3-State ROD by having the total number of Forest Service system motorized routes decreased (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends that motorized trails have less impact than roads, but the site-specific differences in the types of impacts were not adequately recognized in the FEIS and draft ROD (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends the purpose and need of the FEIS did not adequately address the intent of the Multiple-Use and Sustained Yield Act by not considering the needs and significant issues of the motorized community (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends that a hard look of historic use (1870 to 1940) versus current use in the project area was not taken in the analysis (objector 89).

Issue: The objector alleges that the FEIS does not give a hard look at access to motorized trails, so is not in compliance with the Montana Outdoor Recreation Plan (objector 89).

Issue: The objector claims the terms *unauthorized trails* and *user-created routes* should not be used because they have negative connotations and are inaccurate representations of conditions on the ground (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends motorized closures in the Scratch Gravel Hills were not analyzed in the FEIS. They also contend the travel 30 feet for parking and 70 feet for dispersed camping

was not adequately disclosed to the public and that there was not adequate public involvement in the designation of campsites farther than 70 feet from designated routes (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends that dual sport motorcycle popularity was not adequately evaluated and an enthusiast was not on the IDT to identify issues and needs (objector 89).

Issue: The objector alleges that the Forest did not explore reasonable alternatives for single track trails, increased motorized use, alternating use on trails by week, and establishing reasonable sound limits for OHVs (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends there is a significant need for youth loops and practice routes (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends the impacts on fish and wildlife from OHV recreation have been over-stated and have been given too much priority over the quality of the human environment (objector 89).

Issue: Grizzly bear (objectors 82 and 89).

- The objectors question why the travel planning process and amendment do not address spring through summer security for grizzly bears;
- The objectors claim a violation of NEPA because the identification of the fall elk security areas as grizzly bear security areas does not adequately protect the grizzly bears from potential motorized use, and disturbance from management activities such as prescribed burning and logging activities;
- The objectors contend the U.S. FWS could not adequately assess the project's road impacts to grizzly bears;
- The objectors claim a NEPA violation due to the release of a draft decision prior to completion of formal consultation with U.S. FWS, resulting in a cumbersome and difficult public involvement process;
- The objectors claim that current best science for grizzly bear management was not applied to the project because it lacks analysis of OMARD, TMARD, and security;
- The objectors claim the NCDE protocol for grizzly bear management was not applied to the project;
- The objectors contend that the management of open roads between grizzly bear security areas is required under current best science for management;
- The objectors claim the biological opinion for the Divide Landscape is invalid because it does not use current best science to measure 'taking' of grizzly bears;
- The objectors claim that the management of roads by obliteration for grizzly bears is never clearly identified in the DEIS;
- The objectors contend that there is no proof that grizzly bears are impacted and should not be used to close motorized routes and opportunities;

- The objectors claim that the grizzly bear recovery plan is outdated and is “no longer based on the best available science;”
- The objectors assert that the current analysis does not adequately consider grizzly bear delisting under the Reasonably Foreseeable actions.

Issue: The objector argues that the California's Kern and Tulare Counties case applies to the Divide Travel Project. In that case, Court of Federal Claims Senior Judge John Wiese ruled that the government's halting of water constituted a “taking” or intrusion on the farmers' private property rights. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibits the government from taking private property without fair payment.

Issue: The objectors contend: a) the Forest Service violated the Endangered Species Act by not adequately analyzing for snowmobiling effects on lynx and lynx critical habitat; b) the closure of any area because of winter motorized impact to lynx is not valid and, therefore, must not be used to initiate closures; c) the draft ROD is in violation of ESA because it does not recover critical habitat for lynx and bull trout, and d) the Forest did not adequately consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service with respect to bull trout and lynx critical habitat (objectors 82, 89 and 102).

Issue: The objectors contend: a) mitigation measures for minimizing effects to wildlife from visitors, including seasonal closures, education programs, and trail rangers be adequately considered as alternatives to road and trail closures and incorporated into the preferred alternative; b) the best available science related to road density and motorized vehicle impacts on wildlife was not utilized in the analysis – the objector suggests that an Elk Habitat Effectiveness calculation using roads open during hunting season would be a more meaningful parameter; and c) giving wildlife priority over the human environment as has been done in the FEIS and draft ROD violates NEPA, the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act, and the National Forest Management Act (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends the Forest did not consider recreation a multiple use as identified within the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends there are no site-specific data and studies detailing the impacts from OHV recreation on noxious weeds (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends the FEIS and ROD did not adequately evaluate and consider access to historic sites (objector 89).

Issue: The objector alleges that the Travel Management Rule specifies “area” designations are for identifying where motorized is permitted and the agency cannot designate “areas” where motorized is not permitted (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends conformance with the Travel Management Rule is one of two goals of the project purpose and need. The Travel Management Rule excludes horses and bicycles from consideration (in the travel management rule process). The Helena Forest Plan does not restrict bicycle use outside Wilderness. Therefore, a Forest Plan revision would be required to implement those restrictions in the FEIS or draft ROD (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends that a reasonable definition for “significant” conflict was not developed and used as part of the Divide FEIS and draft ROD (objector 89).

Issue: The objector contends the Forest inappropriately allowed the Divide FEIS and draft ROD to let Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 interfere with an equitable management of public land for multiple-uses (objector 89).

Issue: The objector states there is no record of the biological assessment or U.S. FWS's biological opinion (objector 102).

Issue: The objector states that the legal notice was not posted on the Forest's web sites as required (objector 102).

SUMMARY

In conclusion, I have reviewed the assertions that the project violates various environmental laws, regulations, polices, and the Forest Plan. I have in instances provided instructions for the Forest to provide additional or clarifying information to better demonstrate compliance with law, regulation, or policy.

Once these instructions are completed it will be clear the project and the analysis is in full compliance with all laws, regulations, policies, and the Forest Plan, and the Forest Supervisor may sign the Record of Decision for the project. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture, no further review from any other Forest Service or Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available (36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)).

Sincerely,



DAVID E. SCHMID
Deputy Regional Forester

cc: Ray G Smith
William Avey
Jennifer Woods